

## Message Text

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R 180741Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 295  
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
AMEMBASSY DACCA  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY KABUL  
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMCONSUL BOMBAY  
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
AMCONSUL MADRAS  
USLO PEKING  
CINCPAK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 NEW DELHI 4297

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. GDS  
TAGS: PDIP, IN, CH  
SUBJECT: SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS

REF: A. DELHI 3771 (NOTAL) B. DELHI 3952 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: WANG PING-NAN ENDED HIS VISIT TO NEW DELHI WITH  
PRAISES FOR THE ETERNAL NATURE OF SINO-INDIAN FRIENDSHIP.  
PRIME MINISTER DESAI TOLD PARLIAMENT THAT SETTLEMENT OF  
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THE BORDER DISPUTE WAS NECESSARY TO FULL NORMALIZATION OF  
RELATIONS. ALTHOUGH THE BORDER DISPUTE HAD BEEN MENTIONED IN  
HIS CONVERSATION WITH WANG, HE SAID, NO SPECIFIC PROPOSALS HAD  
BEEN DISCUSSED. THE CHINESE HERE ARE ACTIVELY CONVEYING THE  
IMPRESSION THAT THEY WISH TO IMPROVE RELATIONS, AND THE SOVIETS  
ARE NERVOUS. WHILE SOME IN THE MEA ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT SOME  
PROGRESS CAN BE MADE, THE OFFICIAL LINE IS ONE OF CAUTION.

THE GOI IS CAREFULLY WEIGHING A NUMBER OF FACTORS AS IT ASSESSES ITS FUTURE POLICY TOWARD CHINA, THESE INCLUDE EVALUATING CHINESE MOTIVES, DOMESTIC POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND THE IMPACT OF IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE CHINESE UPON INDIA'S TIES WITH THE SOVIET UNION. END SUMMARY.

1. THE DELHI PORTION OF THE VISIT OF WANG PING-NAN AND HIS DELEGATION, WHICH ENDED MARCH 13, WAS MARKED BY INCREASING ATTENTION FROM THE GOI AND BY WANG'S EFFORTS TO REVIVE THE SLOGAN "HINDI-CHINI BHAI BHAI" (SINO-INDIAN BROTHERHOOD) AND TO DOWNPLAY THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BORDER DISPUTE. IN ADDITION TO MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER, THE DELEGATION WAS GIVEN A LUNCHEON BY VICE PRESIDENT JATTI; A RECEPTION BY THE INDO-CHINA FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION; AND ANOTHER RECEPTION AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE ANNEX WHICH, ALTHOUGH OFFICIALLY SPONSORED BY THE KOTNIS MEMORIAL COMMITTEE, WAS WELL ATTENDED BY MP'S, GRACED BY MESSAGES FROM THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE SPEAKER, AND PRESIDED OVER BY THE DEPUTY SPEAKER. IN ALL HIS PUBLIC REMARKS, WANG STRESSED THE EXTERNAL NATURE OF SINO-INDIAN FRIENDSHIP WHICH COULD NOT BE BETRAYED BY "SOME TEMPORARY ZIGZAGS." HE SAID THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE "FRIENDS AS WELL AS BROTHERS" AND THAT "SOMETIMES BROTHERS ALSO QUARREL" BUT REMAIN BROTHERS. WANG HOPED THAT SINO-INDIAN FRIENDSHIP WOULD BLOOM AGAIN IN ALL ITS SPLENDOUR AND THE SLOGAN "HINDI-CHINI BHAI BHAI" WOULD ECHO AGAIN SOON IN BOTH COUNTRIES. DURING HIS DELHI VISIT, WANG MADE NO REFERENCE  
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TO SUPERPOWERS, IMPERIALISM OR HEGEMONY.

2. PURSUING ITS FRIENDLY BUT CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO THE VISITORS, THE GOI MOVED QUICKLY TO DENY PRESS SPECULATION THAT WANG HAD SUGGESTED PROPOSALS FOR SETTLING THE BORDER DISPUTE. MARKH 14 "THE STATESMAN", QUOTING SOURCES "IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE DELEGATION", SAID THAT THE PRC MAY NOW ACCEPT THE COLOMBO PROPOSALS MADE 15 YEARS AGO BY THE HEADS OF SIX NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES AS THE BASIS OF A PERMANENT SETTLEMENT. THE "STATESMAN" ARTICLE ITSELF CARRIED AN OFFICIAL DENIAL THAT ANY SPECIFIC PROPOSALS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED, AND MARCH 15 ALL NEWSPAPERS CARRIED A FURTHER MEA STATEMENT THAT THE WANG DELEGATION "DID NOT ENGAGE IN ANY TALKS OR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE INDIAN SIDE NOR DID IT CONVEY ANY MESSAGE WITH RESPECT TO THE MECHANICS OF A BORDER SETTLEMENT". THIS WAS PRIVATELY REAFFIRMED TO EMBASSY OFFICERS BY MEA OFFICIALS IN THE STRONGEST TERMS. ANSWERING A CALL-ATTENTION MOTION ON THIS SPECULATION IN PARLIAMENT MARCH 16, PRIME MINISTER DESAI SAID THAT HE HAD MADE CLEAR TO WANG THAT FULL NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS COULD NOT BE ATTAINED UNTIL THE BORDER QUESTION WAS RESOLVED "TO OUR MUTUAL SATISFACTION BY NEGOTIATIONS AND PEACEFUL MEANS" AND ON THE BASIS OF THE FIVE PRINCIPLES. THE BORDER QUESTION HAD BEEN MENTIONED IN THIS RES-

PECT, BUT THERE HAD BEEN NO DISCUSSION OF THE COLOMBO PROPOSAL,  
THE MCMAHON LINE OF BOUNDARY DEMARCATION, OR ANY OTHER SPECIFIC  
PROPOSAL. DESAI ALSO SAID THAT HE STOOD BY THE 1962 PARLIAMENTARY  
RESOLUTION, WHICH CALLED FOR DRIVING THE AGGRESSORS FROM THE  
SACRED SOIL OF INDIA, BUT HE WOULD MAKE THE SLIGHT MODIFICATION  
OF SUBSTITUTING FOR THE EXPRESSION "DRIVE OUT" THE WORD "VACATE."  
DESAI'S REMARKS AT THIS POINT WERE GREETED WITH APPLAUSE, AS  
WAS HIS ANSWER TO ANOTHER QUESTION ABOUT THIRD-COUNTRY MEDIATION  
OF THE SINO-INDIAN DISPUTE. DESAI SAID THAT INDIA WOULD NOT PER-  
MIT THE INTERFEREFCE OF WGY THIRD PARTY IN ANY OF ITS BILATERAL  
DISPUTES. DESAI ALSO TOLD PARLIAMENT THAT IN HIS MEETING WITH  
WANG HE HAD REITERATED THE GOI'S "CONSISTENT" POLICY OF FRIENDLY

RELATIONS WITH ALL COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY NEIGHBORS, AND  
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HAD RECAPITULATED THE HISTORY OF INDIAN FRIENDLINESS TOWARD  
CHINA. (MEA JOINT SECRETARY RANGANATHAN TOLD US MARCH 17 THAT  
DESAI'S PARLIAMENTARY DISCUSSION WOULD BE THE GOI'S "FINAL  
WORD" ON THE WANG VISIT.)

3. CHINESE AIMS. THE WANG DELEGATION HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN  
CONVEYING TO THE INDIAN PUBLIC A DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS,  
AND HAS IN THE PROCESS RAISED SOME EXPECTATIONS.

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AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
AMCONSUL MADRAS  
USLO PEKING  
CINCPAC

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REF: A. DELHI 3771 (NOTAL) B. DELHI 3952 (NOTAL)

WHAT THEY HAVE NOT DONE IS TO SATISFY CONSIDERABLE INDIAN  
SCEPTICISM THAT THIS PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORT GOES BEYOND  
RHETORIC. BRITISH AND JAPANESE COLLEAGUES HERE, WHO  
THINK THAT PROGRESS ON THE BORDER WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE,  
NEVERTHELESS ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE CHINESE, AT LEAST IN DELHI,  
HAVE COME TO ACCEPT THAT THE DESAI ADMINISTRATION HAS BROUGHT  
ABOUT A CORRECTION IN THE INDO-SOVIET RELATION AND THAT THERE IS  
AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PRC TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH THE  
GOI AND TO UNDERCUT FURTHER SOVIET INFLUENCE IN THE REGION. THIS  
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ATTITUDE CONTRASTS WITH THE EXPRESSED CHINESE OPINION LAST AUTUMN  
AT THE TIME OF DESAI'S VISIT TO MOSCOW THAT "GENUINE NON-  
ALIGNMENT" AND GOOD INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS WERE INCOMPATIBLE.  
WHAT IS NOT CLEAR TO THESE AND OTHER OBSERVERS HERE, INCLUDING  
OURSELVES, IS THE KIND OF ARRANGEMENT, ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH  
SIDES, WHICH COULD BE MADE TO PROVIDE FOR THE INDIANS THE  
NECESSARY "ACHIEVEMENT" WHEN VAJPAYEE VISITS PAKING. FOR THE  
INDIANS, THIS WOULD LIKELY HAVE TO TOUCH ON THE BORDER DISPUTE  
IN SOME WAY, SINCE PROGRESS ON THIS ISSUE IS PUBLICLY ENSHRINED  
AS THE KEY TO NORMALIZING RELATIONS.

4. THE SOVIETS HERE, OF COURSE, PROFESS TO SEE NO CHANGE IN  
CHINESE POLICY AND TO BEING UNCONCERNED BY WANG'S VISIT AND ITS  
CONSEQUENCES. A SOVIET OFFICIAL TOLD A DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUE  
THAT HE WAS NOT WORRIED BECAUSE THE INDIANS UNDERSTAND THAT THE  
PRC IS NOT SINCERE ABOUT WANTING TO IMPROVE RELATIONS AND IS  
INTENT INSTEAD ON "ENCIRCLING" INDIA BY BUILDING ITS TIES  
WITH NEIGHBORING STATES. IN SAYING THIS, HOWEVER, HE BETRAYED  
A DEGREE OF ANXIETY. THERE ARE OTHER REPORTS, SOME OF WHICH  
HAVE SURFACED IN THE PRESS, THAT THE SOVIETS ARE CONCERNED  
ABOUT SINO-INDIA RELATIONS AND HAVE CONVEYED THIS CONCERN TO  
THE GOI. WE ALSO HEAR THAT THE SOVIETS FEEL AT A DISADVANTAGE  
IN PRESSING THEIR CASE AT THIS STAGE BECAUSE OF THE ABSENCE OF  
AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE VORONTSOV.

5. THE CAUTIOUS REACTION OF THE INDIANS TO WANG'S APPROACH AND THE INVITATION TO VAJPAYEE REVEAL INDIAN UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE PRC'S MOTIVES AND THE APPROPRIATE COURSE FOR THE GOI TO FOLLOW. THE WELL-PUBLICIZED RESPONSE THAT VAJPAYEE'S VISIT MUST BE CAREFULLY PREPARED AND ACHIEVEMENT-ORIENTED IS SEEN HERE AS AN EFFORT TO THROW THE BALL OF INITIATIVE BACK INTO THE CHINESE COURT. IT ALSO SERVED THE JANATA ADMINISTRATION'S DOMESTIC POLITICAL PURPOSES BY ANTICIPATING SOME OF THE COMPLAINTS

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OF SCEPTICS AND POTENTIAL CRITICS WITHIN JANATA AND AMONG OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES. THE CALL-ATTENTION MOTION BY A JANATA MP AND DESAI'S RESPONSE WAS A CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED EFFORT TO REINFORCE THE IMAGE OF THE GOVERNMENT AS TAKING A CONCILIATORY BUT PRINCIPLED APPROACH TOWARD CHINA.

6. THERE IS MUCH SPECULATION IN DELHI ABOUT HARDLINERS SOFTLINERS WITHIN GOVERNMENT ON CHINA. THERE ARE VARIOUS VERSIONS OF THIS DIVISION. ONE IS THAT DESAI AND HIS PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, SHANKAR, ARE MORE WILLING TO RESPOND TO THE CHINESE AND OVER-RULED THE DESIRE OF FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA TO TREAT THE WANG VISIT IN A VERY LOW-KEY MANNER. WE ARE MORE INCLINED TO THINK, HOWEVER, THAT THE GOI RECOGNIZED THAT PRESS AND PUBLIC CURIOSITY AND ANTICIPATION ABOUT THE FIRST CHINESE VISITORS OF ANY RANK IN MANY YEARS COULD NOT BE CONTAINED AND THAT A FRIENDLY WELCOME ALONG WITH THE CAUTIONARY TONE WAS THE BEST RESPONSE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES. WITHIN THE MEA, THERE ARE APPARENT DIFFERENCES OF OPINION. RANGANATHAN, WHILE WELCOMING THE PRC'S DESIRE FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS, TAKES THE POSITION THAT CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY HAS NOT ESSENTIALLY CHANGED; THAT IT STILL ADVOCATES POLICIES IN SOUTH ASIA, SUCH AS SANWFZ AND THE NEPAL ZONE OF PEACE CONCEPT, WHICH INDIA CANNOT ACCEPT; AND THAT IT CONTINUES TO SUPPORT DISSIDENT ELEMENTS IN OTHER ASIAN STATES. (WE ALSO THINK THAT OFFICIALS SCEPTICAL OF THE PRC WOULD HAVE HAD THEIR VIEWS REINFORCED BY WANG'S REFERENCES IN PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH TO IMPERIALISM, HEGEMONISM AND EXPANSIONISM, AND WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED BY HIS GOOD BEHAVIOR ON THIS SCORE WHILE IN DELHI.) PERHAPS TO CONVEY HIS SCEPTICISM ABOUT A CHANGE IN PRC ATTITUDES, RANGANATHAN TOLD US THAT THE CHINESE FIRST SECRETARY HAD CALLED HIM AND ACCUSED THE GOI OF "PURSUING CONTRADICTORY POLICIES" BECAUSE AT THE TIME IT WAS WARMLY RECEIVING WANG IT WAS "INSTIGATING" THE TIBETAN PROTEST DEMONSTRATION OF MARCH 8. CATEGORICALLY REJECTING THE CHARGE, RANGANATHAN SAID, HE IN TURN ASKED THE CHINESE DIPLOMAT HOW HE COULD QUESTION THE SINCERITY OF INDIA'S RECEPTION OF WANG. RANGANATHAN HAS ALSO

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SOUGHT TO CULTIVATE AN AIR OF SOMETHING LESS THAN URGENCY IN DISCUSSING THE "PREPARATIONS" WHICH THE GOI IS NOW PUBLICLY PLEDGED TO UNDERTAKE. HE TOLD THE POL COUNSELLOR IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION ABOUT THESE PREPARATIONS THAT HE WOULD BE BUSY WITH OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES, NEEDED A "SPOT OF LEAVE," ETC.

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7. REPRESENTATIVE OF A SOFTER ATTITUDE IS A.K. DAMODRAN, ADDITIONAL SECRETARY FOR POLICY PLANNING AND LONG-TIME MEA CHINA-WATCHER. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH THE POL COUNSELLOR THIS WEEK, DAMODARAN COED A RELATIVELY OPTIMISTIC "PERSONAL" VIEW THAT SOME PROGRESS ON THE BORDER ISSUE MIGHT BE POSSIBLE. DAMODARAN INTIMATED THAT THE MEA WAS SOMEWHAT SURPRISED BY AND NOT ALTOGETHER HAPPY WITH THE HIGH PROFILE ADOPTED BY THE WANG DELEGATION, BUT HE WAS NOT WILLING TO RULE OUT THAT GOOD WILL IN ITSELF WOULD NOT BE A WELCOME ACHIEVEMENT WHEN VAJPAYEE VISITS PEKING. DAMODARAN THOUGHT THAT THE VISIT WAS AT LEAST

SIX MONTHS AWAY AND SAW TWO ASPECTS OF "CAREFUL PREPARATION" BEFOREHAND. SINCE THE LAST BORDER NEGOTIATIONS IN  
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1961, HE SAID, NEW INFORMATION HAD BECOME AVAILABLE, AND THERE WAS ALSO "THE IMPACT" OF NEVILLE MAXWELL'S BOOK ("INDIA'S CHINA WAR") TO BE CONSIDERED. SECONDLY, HE THOUGHT THAT PUBLIC OPINION HAD TO BE PREPARED BUT THAT THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE WAS FAVORABLE. IN DAMODARAN'S VIEW, THE PASSAGE OF TIME AND THE ACTIVITIES INITIATED BY MRS. GANDHI'S GOVERNMENT HAD PAVED THE WAY FOR SOME KIND OF BORDER SETTLEMENT. HE ALSO THOUGHT IT A MAJOR BENEFIT THAT THE JANATA GOVERNMENT INCLUDED BOTH SUPPORTERS AND CRITICS OF NEHUR'S POLICIES, AND THUS IMPLIED THAT ACCOMMODATION WITHIN THE PARTY WAS POSSIBLE. HE VIEWED MRS. GANDHI'S MEETING WITH WANG AS A SIGN THAT SHE WOULD PLAY THE STATESMAN'S ROLE RATHER THAN THE POLITICIAN'S AND WOULD NOT CRITICIZE EFFORTS AT A SETTLEMENT. (IN THIS RESPECT, THE PRO-INDIRA "NATIONAL HEARLD" IN AN EDITORIAL MARCH 14 COMPLAINED THAT THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO CONFLICT IN 1962 IF CERTAIN SECTIONS, NOW IT CLAIMED MAINLY IN THE JANATA PARTY, HAD NOT CONSISTENTLY OPPOSED NEHRU'S POLIC.) DAMODARAN THOUGHT THAT THE ONLY LIKELY OPPOSITION WOULD COME FROM THE CPI.

8. DAMODARAN ALSO DOWNPLAYED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTINUED CHINESE SUPPORT FOR NAGA AND MIZO REBELS IN ASSESSING THE SINO-INDIAN RELATIONSHIP, A LINE WE HAVE HEARD FROM OTHERS IN THE MEA. HOWEVER, IN HIS REMARKS TO US, RANGANATHAN ALLUDED TO THE UNACCEPTABILITY OF SUCH SUPPORT WHEN HE NOTED THE PARALLEL OF BURMESE CONCERNS OVER CHINESE SUPPORT FOR INSURGENTS. FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA SUBSUMES THIS ISSUE IN HIS BROADLY PHILOSOPHIC DISCUSSIONS OF INDIA'S CONCERNS ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT THE PRC HAS COME TO ACCEPT "THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM OF STATES." THE BRITISH TELL US, MOREOVER, THAT A VERY SENIOR MEA OFFICIAL CONSIDERS THE CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR TRIBAL  
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REBELS A VERY IMPORTANT INDICATION OF CHINA'S ATTITUDE TOWARD INDIA.

9. IN  
BRIEF DISCUSSION MARCH 17, INDIAN AMBASSADOR TO PEKING NARAYANAN (ANOTHER APPARENT SOFTLINER) TOLD VISITING AMBASSADOR WOODCOCK THAT HE BELIEVED THE CHINESE

WANTED TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS. HE SAID HE THOUGHT AN IMPORTANT PURPOSE OF THE WANG VISIT WAS TO ASSESS THE SITUATION IN INDIA. WHEN THE POL COUNSELLOR NOTED THAT PERHAPS WANG HAD FOND PUBLIC INDIAN RECEPTIVITY GREATER THAN THE GOI WOULD HAVE WISHED NARAYANAN SAID THAT PUBLIC ENTHUSIASM SHOULD NOT OBSCURE THE FACT THAT THE GOI ITSELF WISHED BETTER RELATIONS.

10. THERE IS A TENDENCY IN DELHI TO REDUCE THE DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE MEA TO "PRO-SOVIET" AND "PRO-CHINESE" LOBBIES. THIS OVERSIMPLIFICATION OBSCURES THE FACT THAT FOR THE INDIANS A VERY BASIC CONSIDERATION AS THEY EVOLVE THEIR CHINA POLICY IS TO ASSESS NOT ONLY CHINESE INTENTIONS BUT ALSO THE IMPACT OF IMPROVED RELATIONS ON THE INDO-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP. THIS GOVERNMENT HAS WORKED VERY HARD TO SELLLINE THAT GENUINE NON-ALIGNMENT MEANS THAT RELATIONS WITH ANY ONE COUNTRY WILL NOT BE IMPROVED AT THE EXPENSE OF TIES TO ANOTHER. FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA STRESSED THIS POINT AGAIN MARCH 17 TO AMBASSADOR WOODCOCK. THE INDIANS ALSO KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT THEY CANNOT ALTOGETHER ESCAPE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE SINO-SOVIET RIVALRY AND THEY WILL WEIGH VERY CAREFULLY THE BENEFITS THAT MIGHT BE GAINED FROM PURSUING THE CHINESE CONNECTION AGAINST THE VALUE OF THE SOVIET RELATIONSHIP WHICH THE INDIANS HAVE SUCCESSFULLY RESTRUCTURED TO THEIR LIKING. WE DO NOT THINK THE INDIANS HAVE COMPLETED THIS ASSESSMENT NOR HAVE THEY FULLY THOUGHT THROUGH THE QUESTION OF PREPARING PUBLIC OPINION. BOTH OF THESE ELEMENTS CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR

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VERY CAUTIOUS APPROACH.  
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## Message Attributes

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